RHYMES
of the
SUNRISE TRAIL

by
SI TANHAUSER

Illustrated by
SENATOR FORD

PARNASSUS
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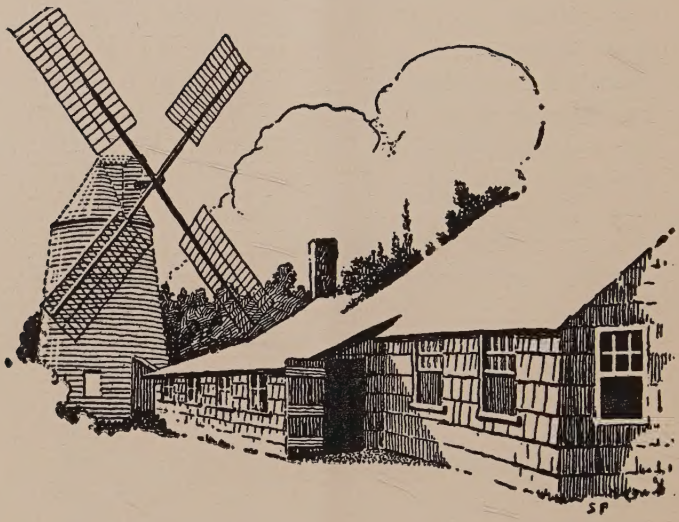


DEDICATED

TO THE MEMORY OF

JOHN HOWARD PAYNE

AUTHOR OF "HOME, SWEET HOME"

FAIRY domes, and palm-trees waving,
And the Southern Cross a-burning,
Or the Circle's bitter hatred
  Where my wand'ring footsteps roam,
I am wearied, disillusioned,
And my sickened heart is turning
To the Island's shores and meadows
  And a little place called Home.

There's a cottage by the inlet
Where the apple orchard's drifted,
And the lilacs' purple massing
  Scents the twilight's peaceful gloam,
Where the robin and the blackbird
Wing the clouds of sunset rifted,
And a candle lights the window
  Of a little place called Home.

Star of Evening, Star of Evening,
Bid my weary feet to follow,
Guide me o'er the darkened billow
  And the surging restless foam,
For my soul is longing, longing
For the song of thrush and swallow,
And the loving hearts that miss me
  In a little place called Home.

INTRODUCTION

I BRING ye small measure of rhythm and rhyme to delight ye,
I sing ye no anthems to stir ye and quicken your pulses,
I bear ye no message of policy, no revelations
To teach ye, or chide ye, to moralize with ye, or guide ye,
I bring to ye only the breath of the Land of the Sunrise,
The gossamered wandering wraith of discernless dimension
That walks in the moonlight by shallowing tide-fingered sandbars,
By marsh and by inlet, by trails through the murmuring forest,
And cries for expression, for sympathy, seeking forever
A blind comprehension, the sob of a motherless orphan,
Where none, there is none, who will listen and comfort its sorrow.

Oh, ye who are pitfalled and fettered, and prisoned in cities,
And cry out of bitter monotony, yearning and longing
For freedom, the wideness of primitive infinite spaces,
The crashing of breakers on nameless and untrodden beaches,
The sweep of the stars, and the turbulent forces of nature,
The ocean unleashed, and the elements riven in anguish,
The feeling around ye of things which are not in the darkness,
The winds of the night and the drip of the rain in the forest:

Oh, ye that would grasp where your fingers would gather no substance,
And walk with your soul-ankles bound in a kind understanding
Of voices that call to ye out of the mist and the shadows
That curtain the Valley of That Which Is Gone and Forgotten,
Who vision the tale of the broken-edged arrowhead lying
So weary and useless, unnoticed alone by the roadside,
The story the tooth of the shark that the needle had centered
Would tell of the hands that had drilled it and polished and strung it
In days that are not, and of flesh that is dust that it girdled:

To ye who would follow the Trail through the gloom of the forest,
The Trail that must lead ye afar down the Path of the Ages,
To walk with a people forgotten and sit in their lodges,
And be as of them but a will-o'-wisp ghost of tradition,
A spirit, a shadowy meaningless figment of fancy,
I bring ye the breath aboriginal, naked and formless,
The breath of the dawn-waiting hush ere the darkness is broken,
The sullen, the laboring tide, and the night-wearied billow,
The grinding of barrier ledges, rebellious protesting,
I bring ye the light of the stars and the moon hanging pendent,
The hurried, the cloudening east at the hour of daybreak,
The crash of the dawn on the headland, the Shield of the Sungod,
The bursting of flame in the Glory and Splendor of Morning.

I bring ye the song of the sea and the wind in the branches,
The waving of meadowgrass, splash of the porpoise and dolphin,
The little red fox in his hole at the root of the pine tree,
The desolate cry of the gull and the boom of the heron,
I bring ye the smoke of the fireplace spiraling upward,
The shadow of lodges that swing in the golden noon sunshine,
The song of the warrior, love of the youth and the maiden,
And Time drifting langorous, reckonless, peaceful, enchanted.

I call to ye out of the Night of the Years that are vanished,
A Voice from the Land of the Spirit, the Shores of Remembrance,
I read ye a page from the book of tradition and story,
And sound ye a cry for the days that the ages have gathered;
I call to ye over the heaving, the surging Eternal
To pause ye, and list to the things that my music would bring ye,
A breath of the forest with stars bending low in the evening,
The Song of the Sea and the Voice of the Island, Pomonok.

SOUTHAMPTON

COME to me when young September
Calls her little maids together
And an eager wind takes tiny teething bites,
Where the sands are mellowed tender,
And the mack'rel skies afeather,
With the kiddies, on the beaches, flyin' kites.

By the waves that splash and rumble,
Waves that argue, whine, and grumble,
Gulls that wheel and skim in crested, shadowed flights,
Wings of gray and silver flashing,
'Cross the wind-swept clouds a-slashing,
And the kiddies, oh, the kiddies, flyin' kites.

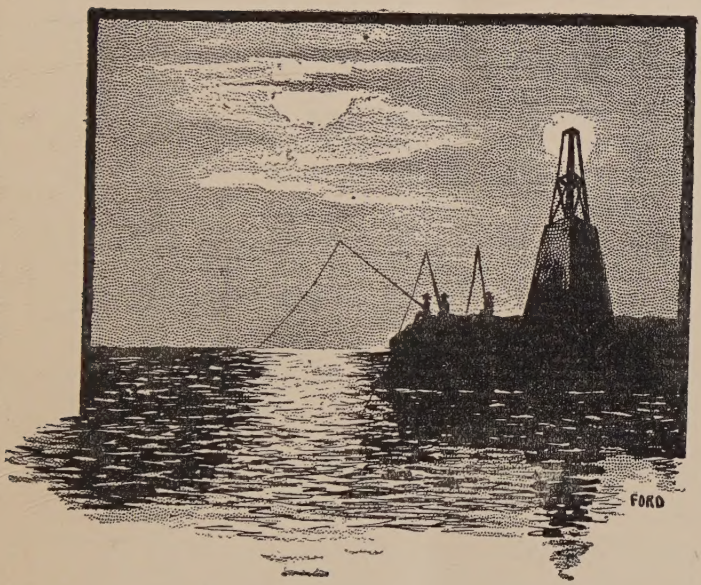
Come to me when young September
Like a naked maiden dances
With the fairies through the sunset's fading lights,
Through the glory, through the splendor,
Swirled in mystic dreams and trances,
With the kiddies, on the shingle, flyin' kites.

FISHIN' ON THE JETTY

GIT yer line an' sinkers ready,
Git yer bait an' hooks t'gether,
Git yer overalls an' gumboots on
An' come along with me,
For th' wind is from th' sou'ard,
Clear an' mellow autumn weather
An' there's fishin' on the jetty,
An' there's moonlight on th' sea.

Bring yer pipe an' yer t'baccer,
An' a pint, we ain't offended

By a drop to warm th' innards
  Same as how we ought to be,
When th' starry night is callin',
An' th' supper hour's ended,
An' there's fishin' on the jetty,
  An' there's moonlight on th' sea.



We'll be all good pals t'gether,
Hookin' cod, an' ling, an' whitin',
Drop yer work an' hang th' women,
  Come along an' let's be free,
Bring yer lantern an' yer grub-box,
Find a place where somethin's bitin',
For there's fishin' on th' jetty,
  An' there's moonlight on th' sea.

LONG ISLAND

Ye call me Long Island whom winds of the dawn named Pomonok,
The Land of the Sunrise, where Mattiwoc, Patchogue, Manhasset
And Nissaquogue dreamed by the emerald flame of the billows
That thundering beat on my breast through the ages forgotten.

Ye call me Long Island; from citadel-towered Manhattan
I reach like a jewel on the brow of the surging Atlantic,
The Barrier Reef of the Empire State, veering eastward
My fish figuration, the body of me, and I flicker
The flukes of my tail in the face of embarrassed New England.

From oily Gowanus to Montauk my measure is taken
In mileage one hundred and forty, the breadth of me reckoned
From Oak Island Beach to the lowering Hills of Setauket
A scant seventeen, and the shoe-beaten ribboning highways
That wind in and out are as webs of the black and gold spider
That laces the shadowy aisles of my forests; by inlet,
And haven, through cedar and maple and birch they meander;
Through meadow and woodland, o'er purpling moors where the heather
And silvery gorse spreads an azuring, goldenish carpet;
By summer seas kissing the sands of my murmurous beaches,
And uplands that drowse sleepy-eyed in the mist-curtained dawning.

My nerves and my sinews are steel of the flame-driven coursers,
The Road of the Cannon Ball, Hamptons, the Montauk, the Sunrise,
The 'Gansett, Ronkonkoma, Scoot and the neighborly Speonk;
The Rail of the Pennsy deep tunnels my westering vitals
And spreads like a fan down the length of my fish-postured Island,
Through Suffolk and Nassau, the Hills of Sewanak, the Commacks,

The pine-needled byways of Wyandanch and Yaphank, the mirror
Of tided Ronkonkoma's waters, majestic Peconic,
The meadows of Mattituck, shallowing bars of Arsh'momoque,
By forest and headland, by ledges where thundering billows
Eternally hammer the coasts of the Island Pomonok.

And south ye may ride on the wings of the flame by the waters
Of Mastic, Poospatic, of Quiogue, of Seatuck, and Quantic,
Through villages giving ye welcome and bidding ye tarry,
Through woodlands where opening vistas in glory assemble
The lavening arms of the Bay in the sunlight, and beaches
That hang hazy azure clouds flung on the summer sea dreaming,
The flash of the gull wing, the hawk on the bough of the cedar,
The flight of the gray goose, the mallard, the lark in the heavens,
The line of the breakers, their snowy caps cresting the sandbars,
Their amethyst breasts, and their crashing and boiling and grinding,
The fingering lighthouse of Ponquogue, the waves of Tiana,
The Shinnecocks rolling their featherish hills, and the forests
Of twisted and tempest-wracked oak trees, the sand dunes, the inlets,
The way that is Bonic where memory quickens to legends
Of flame-spouting whales and the dolphin, the harpon and dory,
Where 'Gansett lies smiling resistlessly calling and calling,
The Hither Hills basking in sunshine, the Headland of Montauk,
The slumbering, crouching Montauk, with the breath of the dawning
Becrimsoning, flooding with glory, her palace-crowned summits,
The bowering trails of her hills and the spray-misted ledges,
The heather in purple, the web of her fairy enchantment,
The silver-spread canvas that, billowing, draws to the sighing
Of zithering breezes the Song of the Sea in their bosom.

Ye call me Long Island, I stand in the House of the Daybreak
And bow as the chariot wheel of the Glory of Morning
Comes rolling, the rim of his shield dripping blood, from the ocean,
My Lover, eternally faithful, to sweep me with passion,
To crown me with garlands, to mantle, and kiss, and embrace me,
To whisper me night-gathered secrets of wonder and magic;
I take to my bosom the shafts of his glittering arrows
And weep in my gladness the quivering pain of their beauty,
The panged resurrection, the fulness of satisfied hunger;
I bring him the children I bore him to feast in his pleasure,
The hamlets, the villages, nestled in forest and clearing,
By crescent-shaped harbors, by lakeside, and salt meadows waving,
By murmuring beaches, and bars, and by headlands indented,
The reaches of Orient drifting, the Hills of Montauket,
The silver Peconic, the Isle of Manhasset, and Bonic,
Where nestles Sag Harbor, where Noyac winds, where Sabonoque
Goes down to the sea with a seine on his naked, brown shoulder,
The day-dreaming Southold, the Shinnecocks cloudening shadowed,
The Mecox a-ripple, the Gut of the Black Dog a-growling,
The happy, the clustering jewels of the valleys of Nassau,
The Island of Flame and the meadows of Merrick and Wantagh.

They call me Long Island who have been the Isle of Pomonok,
The House of the Sunrise, the Place Where the People Go Fishing,
The Land of the Sea Flame, Sewanak, the home of the cheequet,
The quahaug, the hamaugh, the blackbird, the thrush and the robin,

The Barrier Reef of the Empire State that the Sun-god
In ages no man hath remembered had flung in his mercy,
A jewel on the wave of the mighty, the rolling Atlantic,
That they whom he loved might in fulness of peace and
contentment
Come dwell 'neath the wings of his bounty forever and ever.

EYAH MINNAUQUA

God of the Sea
And the Surges Contending;
What have ye done with him?
Where have ye taken?
Empty my arms, and my bosom forsaken;
Lone, all alone, and the darkness descending.

I that have walked with thee;
I that have followed thee;
I that have cherished the flame of thy sacrifice;
I that creep weary the stones of thine altar place;
Tears that are blood. Bring him back.
Bring him back to me.

God of the Sea
And the thundering billow;
Hear me, oh, hear, at thy feet I am falling;
Blood of my heart, and the tears that are calling,
Calling him back to my desolate pillow.

God of the Sea
And the Surges Contending;
What have ye done with him?
Where have ye taken?
Empty my arms, and my bosom forsaken;
Lone, all alone, and the darkness descending.

LITTLE SLICE O' HEAVEN

WHEN the Spring comes calling me I want to go
Where the grass is waving and the gardens grow,
Where the trees lift crowns into a sky of blue
And the speckled sunlight comes a-filt'ring through,
When my work is over let me get away
From the toil, the weariness, the walls of gray,
From the noise and bustle let me hasten home
To a slice of Heaven that is all my own.

Let me find a little place the crowds don't go
In a sunwashed village where the folks are slow,
Where the traffic's easy, and a chap can ride
At the speed he chooses through the countryside;
Just a tiny hamlet that is not too far
From the railroad station and the trolley car,
With a school, a chapel, and a row of stores,
And a few miles' journey to the big town's doors.

Let me own a cottage on a shaded street
With a wide grape arbor and a lawn trimmed neat,
With a hedge for clipping and some shrubs and vines,
And a screened veranda where the rambler climbs,
Let a swing be hanging 'neath an old gnarled tree,
And a sand heap waiting for the children three—
Oh, to bring the kiddies from the pavements hard
Where they'd play in safety in their own back yard.

And I'd want a garden where in row by row
The onions, radishes, and beans would grow,
Where I could putter 'round and rest my mind
In the cool of evening from the day's long grind,
Where I'd lift my spirit in a muted prayer
To the sunset's blessing and the clean sweet air,
And I'd thank the God who gave me right to be
On a slice of Heaven that belonged to me.

And I'd want a cellar where I'd keep the toll
Of the garden's bounty and the winter's coal,
With a workbench fastened to the farther wall
Where my saw and hammer would be at my call,

And I'd stretch my credit at the hardware store
For the things my starving hands are craving for,
And I'd spend my evenings like a boy from school
At my bench down cellar when the nights grew cool.

In my leisure moments 'neath the moon and star
I'd build me a little place to keep my car,
There'd be room a-plenty so my wheels could clear
The heaps of playthings that the kids held dear,

There'd be shelves and brackets, there'd be hooks
by scores,
There'd be nails by hundreds in the two-by-fours,
There'd be corners cluttered with the broken gears
Of the household wreckage of the passing years.

Oh, I want to travel with the gang I've seen
To town each morning on the eight-fifteen,
I want to mingle in their friendly cheer,
And buy my paper as the train draws near,
To ride in comfort with the same old crowd,
To smoke, and chatter, and to laugh out loud,
To cut for dealer as we roll along
To the measured music of the wheel-truck's song.

Oh, I'm always planning how I'd like to give
The kids and the little wife a chance to live
Where the sunshine's golden and the air comes clean,
Where there's flowers blooming and the grass waves
green,
Of a place that's calling to the kids to play
With the birds and the butterflies the livelong day,
Of a little kingdom that is mine alone,
On a slice of Heaven that is all my own.

THE BILBERRY BUSH

REMEMBER, oh, Nadja, the days when we walked
in the bilberry bush?
Oh, remember
The juniper tunnels; the arrowing bolts
of the sun shafting down
through the branches?

The Song of the Sea, and the thundering tramp
of his feet on the floor
of the ledges?
An echoing bell; and the cry of a gull?
Remember, oh, Nadja?
Remember?

The years, oh, the years, like a sail-empty ocean
roll sorrowing weeping between us.
The sun-sprinkled paths, and the bumble bees' drone
are as memories, memories scented
With amber and lavender, cedar and musk,
and a loneliness whispering crying
Of voices that drift on the wings of the night
o'er the waste of the desolate billow.

Remember, oh, Nadja, the hush of the gloom
'neath the needling pine?
Oh, remember,
The fluttering wing, and the half-uttered note
of the robin and lusterous
blackbird?
The blue of the sky, and the smokenish fluff
of the shadows that island
her bosom?
The beach-stranded seaweed? The hissing of spray?
Remember, oh, Nadja?
Remember?

Oh, when will the iron tomorrow return me
the glisten of yesterday's dewdrop?
Oh, where has the gold that was sunrise and nooning
and star of the summer night vanished?
And where are the feet that once walked in my heart
with the Song of the Sea in their ankles?
And I tread the tunneling bilberry bush
with the ghost of a dream that is ended.

THE OLD MILL STREAM

NIGHTS o' May when the frogs are cheepin',
Wind's a-restin' an' the stars agleam,
Me, an' Pop, an' my Uncle Amos
Talk of fishin' down the old mill stream;
Talk of chub an' of bullheads bitin',
Talk of eddies where the squawfish teem,
Talk of banks where the alder bushes
Hang an' draggle in the old mill stream.

Nights o' May when the moon is ridin',
Cloud banks breakin' all arift an' seam,
Me, an' Pop, an' my Uncle Amos
Think of shadows on the old mill stream;
Think of holes 'neath the tented willows,
Holes a-swirlin' full of perch an' bream,
Think of jays an' of catbirds cryin'
In the thickets by the old mill stream.

Nights o' May when we're done with milkin',
Fed the horses an' we've set the cream,
Me, an' Pop, an' my Uncle Amos
Can't help thinkin' of the old mill stream;
Think of pools where the painted turtle
Sits all day upon his log adream,
Shafts of gold through the branches playin'
On the ripples of the old mill stream.

Nights o' May when the meadow's sleepin',
Dew jewel-powdered like the stars that gleam,
Me, an' Pop, an' my Uncle Amos
Talk of roddin' down the old mill stream;
Stay up late talkin' hooks an' tackle,
Till the women from the bedroom scream:
"Goodness sakes, must you sit and cackle
All night long about the old mill stream?"

Nights o' May when the orchard's flamin',
  An' we've foddered down the cows an' team,
Me, an' Pop, an' my Uncle Amos
  Hear the murmur of the old mill stream;
Hear it call an' we just can't stand it,
  Hear it beggin' us to plan an' scheme,
Me, an' Pop, an' my Uncle Amos
  To come fishin' down the old mill stream.

SUNRISE ON MONTAUK

I HEAR thee singing, singing in the dawn,
Where I across the slumb'rous waves would walk
With eager lips to kiss thy dewy feet,
Thy golden hands, thy fingers,
O Montauk.

Roll back, roll back thy curtain, brooding night,
Thy spangled-tented canopy unsway,
The countless stars that stare the dark in fright,
The drunken moon that reels,
For lo, 'tis day.

I hear thee singing, singing in the dawn,
Where shafts of crimson, amethyst, and tawn
Around thee walk,
And oh, that I might kiss
Thy golden hands, thy fingers,
O Montauk.

THE FISHER

Oh, sing ye, oh, Hills of Pomonok,
Oh, sing ye, oh, Waters of Bonic,
Oh, sing ye a song of my lover.

My lover hath gone to the fishing,
The spear in his hand hath he taken,
The net hath he cast on his shoulder.
And I, even I, on the headland,
Have watched where the flash of his paddle
Dipped red in the blood of the sunrise;
Have watched him receding, diminished,
Where crimsoning lips of the morning
Their gates opened wide to receive him.

Oh, Sun who art rolled in the heavens,
Oh, Wheel of the Flame, I beseech thee,
Be generous, generous, to him,

And send him at even returning,
His prow laden deep with the harvest
Of channel, of tide-rip, and sandbar.

Oh, blackfish that waits on the ledges,
Oh, flatfish that nibbles the marshes,
Come swift to the spear of my lover,
Come joyously singing and gladly
To lie in the net that he throws ye.

I take, on the edge of the shallows,
A plume of the white and blue heron,
To feather the band on his forehead.
I weave me a garland of flowers
And seashells that roll on the sandbar
To girdle his loins and his ankles.
I dig me the clam from the mudflat
To roast on the stones, and prepare him
A dish at the hour he cometh.
I walk in the smoke of the lodges
To fatten the samp in his kettle,
For lo, he is mine, and he hungers.

Oh, Winds of the Strait of Manhasset,
Oh, Forest of Noyac, listen,
He cometh, my lover returneth.
Oh, shafts of the arrowing sunset,
Oh, cedar that broods on the headland,
And feet of my heart, run ye swiftly
To dance me a dance on the sandbar,
For lo, it is he, I behold him,
He cometh, my lover returneth.

Oh, sing ye, oh, Hills of Pomonok,
Oh, sing ye, oh, Waters of Bonic,
Oh, sing ye the song of my gladness,
He cometh, my lover returneth.

THE ISLAND, POMONOK, IS CALLING

Oh, ye that would walk in the breath of the dawn on the headlands,
To whisper the paling stars out of the sky, and lay fingers
Caressingly tender on hurried and crimsoning cloudlets
That gather to pearl-bosomed islands the gold of the sunrise,
With lavender banners free-flowing, with smoky-fringed edges,
All blazing, pulsating, in glorious tassel-tailed splendor,
Where kindles the glow of the thundering wheel-truck of morning:

Oh, come to the land where the daybreak is birthed of the ocean;
Oh, come to the Place of Enchantment, the House of the Sunrise;
Oh, come ye, in gladness, the Island, Pomonok, is calling;
Oh, come to the arms that would fold ye and hold ye forever;
Come walk in the dew of the dawn on the flowering uplands;
Come list to the song of the sea and the echoing surges;
Come sing with the murmuring breeze through the harp of the cedar,
The whitening birch, and the wind-tortured oak, and the meadow grass waving.

Oh, ye shall be lovers that happily stroll, grasping fingers;
Oh, ye shall be sweethearts to kiss in the bowering dogwood,
To drink in the breath of the may-pink, the trailing arbutus,
With ankles that bathe in the showering tears of her fragrance;
Oh, ye shall be lovers that roam where the bumble-bee drowses,
The thrush on the bough and the gull on the widening sandbars,
Where gurgling chuckles sing low when the tide is receding;
And know where the hawk marks the flash of the wave-leaping dolphin.

Oh, ye shall be lovers that gather the purpling berry
That ladens the branches, the tendriling grape, and the beach plum;

Oh, ye shall be lovers that skim in the flight of a swallow,
With wind-filling canvas, the creak of a mast, and the rocking
Of anchoring sharpies that ride on the edge of the channel,
To feel the glad tug of the sea-bass, the hungering flounder;
Oh, ye shall be lovers that wander the paths of the forest
The feet of a people no legend or song hath remembered
In ancient days trampled, beplumed and engirdled with sea-shells,
To answer the voice of the newly born God of the Sunrise;
Where maidens with golden arms bathed in the murmuring shallows
When stars of the steel-glittered darkness were faded and vanished.

Oh, ye shall be lovers that play in the golden-belled nooning
With glistening bodies the rollers of emerald cleaving,
Or sleepy-eyed happily dreaming in oven-scooped hollows
On tempest-torn sand dunes, on whitening beaches, and ledges;
Oh, ye shall be kindred of all that the brush of the rainbow
With azure and crimson and greenishing filtering sunlight
Paints, shadowing-ribbed, on the fathoming floor of the ocean:
The brackening seaweed, the squid, and the pearly-mouthed mussel;
Oh, ye shall be lovers that stand on the brow of the evening
And mark where the veiling haze portals the westering sunset,
The glowing stars hung every one in their places appointed,
The Milky Way spreading its blossoming carpet of star dust,
The throat-choking wonder, the moon, o'er the silver sea rising.

Oh, ye who would walk with the hands of the dawn in your bosom,
The scarleting glory that rides on the crest of the billow;
Oh, ye who have emptiness, aching, and yearning of spirit,
And dream of a languorous beauty, eternal, transcendent,
Oh, come ye, oh, come to the haven of peace that awaits ye,
The Place of Enchantment, the sweetness of echoing waters,
Oh, hear ye, in gladness, the song that the surges are singing,
The Land of the Sunrise, the Island, Pomonok, is calling.

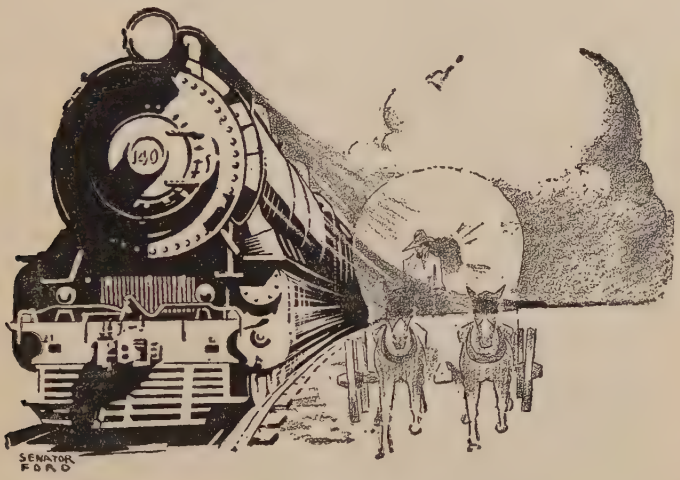
THE SONG OF TRANSPORTATION

THIS is the song of me that am the Rail,
The Song of Transportation that I sing.

I am the Railroad, infinite, supreme.
I am the god whose unbenumbered shrines
Are set upon a hundred thousand hills.
The fires of my altars light the fanes
And temples of unbound'ried empirates.
The universal hearthstone is my seat.
I fill the empty stomachs of mankind;
I clothe and shield their nakedness, and pour
The golden harvest spoils of land and sea
On those who do me reverence and those
Who challenge my dominion. To the just
And unjust with impartial hand I fling
The manna of my plenty. In my blind
Insensate way I shower forth my gifts
On all who crave and hunger. And I bless
The children of my bounty every one.

I plant the seed of commerce, and I rear
The nursling stem with thoughtfulness and care.
I spread my hands across the barren waste,
And lo, it blossoms and is glorified
To fruitfulness and happiness. I spend
The talent of the passing day to buy
The hundred talents of the morrow's dawn.
I cast my bread upon a slumb'rous sea
Where veiled potentialities await
The Voice to call them forth; and I discount
The storm-tossed wreckage of the cancelled years
To drop my anchor where its flukes may catch
And drag the visioned future's ledging floor.

What have I brought ye? What have I bequeathed?
What have I given? And ye reckon not.
Gone is the oxcart from the trackless plain,
The covered wagon and the burro's pack,
The plodding hopeless skeletons that dragged
Their creaking way across the desert's blight.



Gone is the ever-crowding fear that walked
The path beside ye in the days ye gave
An answer to the sunset's west'ring call.
Gone is the darkness and the wordless page
Of ignorance and shackled servitude
Of hideous and superstitious night.
Gone is the selfishness, the fostered hate
Of cantoned isolation, and the sword
That whispered foul suspicion, greed, and lust.
The hunger and the loathesomeness that crawled
In corners to the trysting place where pawed

The pallid horseman's ghastly saffron steed,
The wretchedness, the suffering, the strife,
The inhumanity of man to man
That marked the mileage posts of yesteryear
Are gone forever, and the golden glow
Of this the dawn of our enlightenment
Hath Labor crowned and Service deified.
And I, the Railroad, even I, am he
That curtained down the horror-stricken Past,
And with my flaming falchion cut the cords
That bound ye to its wheel.

No time hath known the wonder that am I.
No age hath dreamed of these the things ye see;
The mountain-heaped prosperity, the wealth,
The comfort and convenience I have brought
Into your lives. All that ye have and are
Have I made possible. I am the Rock,
The spiked foundation of the plan ye rear
Among the mazing stars.

This is the song of me who am the Rail;
The Song of Transportation; and the Voice
Of wheels that roll in thunder-breathing flame;
Whose fingers span the continents; whose yoke
Is set upon the tossing, crested manes
Of sullen, surging seas. It is the Song
Of me whose altar fires light the land;
Whose shrines are fountained with a living flood
That cups communion to a thirsting world.
It is the song of caravels that stamp
The quaking earth; the song of webs of steel
That bind the hearts and serve the needs of man.
It is the song of me, the flying feet
Of lightning, and the mercy of the gods;
The song of me, the rolling gleaming Rail;
The Song of Transportation that I sing.

COMMACK

GIRL o' Mine, did you stand
Where the stars faded dim,
And the curtains of night rolled away,
When the fingering touch
Of the gladdening dawn
The shouldering hills misted gray?

Did you walk, Girl o' Mine,
In the web of the dew,
When the shafts of the sun shot the sky,
And the clouds all a-pearl
'Cross the deepening blue
Came galloping, galloping by?

Girl o' Mine, did you sing
As the east all aglow
Burned lavender, crimson and gold,
A song of the Hills
Marching row upon row,
Where the drums of the dawn beat and rolled?

Did you pray, Girl o' Mine,
Just a wee silent prayer
Of the gladness that welled in your breast,
To the god of the sunrise,
The morning so fair,
While the stars faded dim in the west?

Oh, the Hills, Girl o' Mine,
Oh, the Hills in the morn,
With the mist from their brow rolled away;
Lift thy voice, oh, my soul,
Sing of Glory reborn,
For behold, Girl o' Mine, it is day!

THE SLAVERS FROM THE MAINLAND RAVAGE THE COAST OF BONIC

THE war canoe of the Narragansett cometh from out of the mouth of the sunrise to plunder the coasts of the Island;

He gathered the people that falleth into his hand and carrieth them away across the Great Water whose farther shore the eye of no man discerneth;

He taketh them to be his bondsmen and slaves, to serve his will forever, forever and forever;

Woe unto them that are gone, the youth and the maiden, the warrior, and the little children clinging at the breasts of grief-stricken mothers;

Woe unto them that go and return no more;
And woe unto us, we helpless ones, that watch them depart, and can do nothing;

Woe unto us who are left behind to grieve for them that return not again even unto the end of time;

Woe unto us all, woe, woe, woe.

They have drawn their canoes upon the sands, they have builded a fire upon the beach, the quahaug roasts among the coals, the cheequet and the hamaugh simmer in the kettle;

They press the captives to eat;

How, oh, how can the belly yearn when the heart is glutted with sorrow?

Sorrow of the young man for the maiden left behind;

Sorrow of the maiden for the lover who lieth among the shallows where the eager sands suck the drops of red that drip, drip, drip;

Sorrow of the warrior whose fettered feet shall sing no more among the ferns of the forest;

And sorrow of the weeping woman that presses the crying babe to her bosom and grieves for the children of yesterday that are no more forever;

And the house of bondage waits in the Fear Whispered Lands beyond the Place of the Sunrise.

Look well upon the land ye have loved, ye who must leave it forever;

Lift up your eyes and count in all finality the things ye never more shall see again;

Look up, that ye remember, where your feet shall tread the broken path whose way hath no return;

One last, one ling'ring farewell gaze upon the tinted clouds that burn and kindle in the blaze of dawn,

The hurried sun that even now comes marching, marching o'er the hill to walk between the rows of golden corn;

The sentried hills, the swelling breasts, that wooded roll in hazy bluish grandeur;

The valleys where the goldenrod and meadow grasses wave, luxuriant, abundant;

And the sea;

The azure deep that heaves in slumb'rous might; that broods and keeps the mysteries it hides beneath its roomed expanse;

Oh, look your last;

Look ye upon the land, oh, mark it well, ere these your eyes behold it never more;

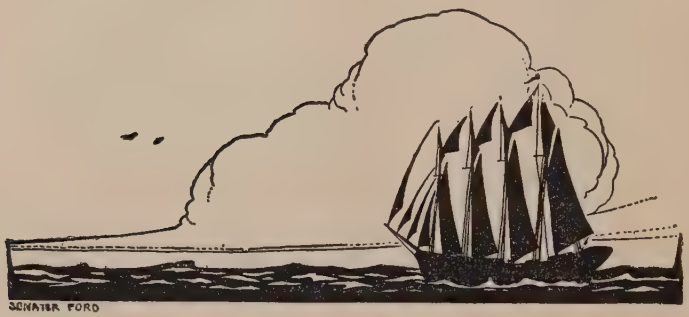
Woe unto ye that go;

Woe unto us that remain;

Woe, woe, woe.

THE ISLAND

Don't you hear the ocean callin'?
Hear the ocean callin', callin'?
Don't you hear the breakers fallin'
  An' a-tumblin' on the sand?
Don't you hear the ripples laughin'?
Hear the happy ripples laughin'?
Hear their chatterin' an' chaffin'?
  Don't you hear, an' understand?



Don't you want to stop an' lis'en
To the sudgin' spludgin' billow?
Don't you want to come an' tramp along
  The wet an' sloshy shore?
Don't you want to spend a visit
With the seaweed an' the fishes?
Ain't you ever, ever comin' back
  To see them any more?

Fleecy white clouds in the heavens;
Fleecy white clouds sailin', sailin';
Green the ocean rolls to seaward
  Melting into blue an' pearl;

An' the slantin' sails of schooners,
With the sun upon their canvas,
An' the smother at their forefoot
Where the frothy churners curl.

Don't you hear them callin', callin'?
Don't you hear the deep sea breathin'?
Don't you hear it laugh an' giggle?
Hear its whisperish refrain?
Can't you smell the breezes blowin'
From the green isles of the ocean?
Don't you want to heed their chantey
An' come back to them again?

SOUTHOLD

SERENE and calm
I sit enthroned in memories of the past
And watch the endless days go speeding by
Like autumn leaves borne swirling on the wind
To sink amidst the dim and silent years.

Tomorrow comes
As this today came creeping from the east
To shoot the scarlet streamers of the dawn
Adown the brooding valley of the night,
As yesterday on gauzy sunkissed wing
Pinioned its way to that forgotten shore
Where ghosts of faded moments meet and dream.

With gentle smile
And fearless sweet humility I walk
In measured tread unfaltering along
The marching years; so day but follows day
And in the pride of my remembered past
Sphinxlike I sit and watch
Serene and calm.

SPEARIN' EELS ON SOUTHOLD BAY

Oh, the times when we went eelin'
In the days of long ago,
When the ice had bound the channel
An' the shore lay deep in snow,
When the leafless inky branches
Etched a sky of slatey gray,
An' the eelspears were a-spearin' up
The mud of Southold Bay.

An' the hills of Shelter Island,
When the night began to crawl,
Growin' dim an' dim an' dimmer
Till they weren't there at all,
In the creepin' twilight blotted,
Curtained like an ended play,
While the eelspears churned an' mired up
The mud of Southold Bay.

There's a lantern at the Landing,
There's a gleam off Paradise,
There's a window in the Harbor
Like an old man's blinkin' eyes,
Like a half-seen shuttered glimmer,
Oh, so lonesome far away
From the clickin' eelspears turnin' up
The mud of Southold Bay.

There's no moon to ride the heavens,
There's no stars to hang an' glow,
But the tortured bluish radiance
Of mirrored ice an' snow
Pours a ghastly dimmish luster,
Dregs of night an' ghost of day,

'Round the darkened forms a-spearin' up
The mud of Southold Bay.

Not a breathin' wind a-stirrin',
Not a dervish swirl of flake,
Not a sound except the boomin'
When the frost-cracks give an' take,
Not a sound except the thunder
Of the tide-flaws givin' way,
An' the spears that drip an' splotter up
The mud of Southold Bay.

Oh, the times when we went eelin',
In the nights of long ago,
When the ice was on the channel
An' the shore slept 'neath the snow,
When the lonesome wintered forest
Raised its naked arms to pray,
An' the eelspears were a-spearin' up
The mud of Southold Bay.

POMONOK

Out of the night and the darkness ascending,
Out of the sound-gulching caverns of Ocean,
Cometh the Dawn and the breath of the Sunrise,
Tearing the mists of the Morning asunder,
Kissing thy lips and thy fingers,
Pomonok.

Stars and the paling moon frightened descending
Over the heaving waste's ceaseless commotion,
Treading thy pathway of glory, O Sunrise,
Shouldering surges that batter and thunder
Touching their lips to thine ankles,
Pomonok.

MONTAUK

I DREAMED I heard the Sunrise calling thee
As flinging back the curtained veils of night
He lashed his burnished chargers into flight
And rolled his golden car across the sea;
The misty melting fields of pearling flame
Bowed low in crimson greeting as he came,
And riding thus he called thee, called thy name,
Come forth to meet thy lover, O Montauk.

I dreamed I saw the dew upon thy hair,
The flowered dewdrops misting in thine eyes,
As from thy heathern couch thou didst arise
To greet thy lord of heaven, earth, and air;
I saw thee lift thy palaced hills and vales,
Thy brooding headlands, dogwood-drifted trails,
The tossing foam, the sunlight-gathered sails,
The dawn upon thy forehead, O Montauk.

I dreamed and visioned nestled at thy feet
The cluttered commerce of a mighty land,
The commerce of the nations through thy hand
Go streaming, surging; saw the golden street
Where thou didst walk, with eye that ranged afar
The future years; thy rising morning star
Burned on the tide, and wisdom swung ajar
Thy smiling gates in welcome, O Montauk.

I dreamed I saw ten thousand furling mast
In peace and safety riding on the breast
Of this thy bosomed haven; yet the crest
Of ever flowing streams that followed fast
To glut thy bounty flung, thy coffers wide,
Were yet unborn to cleave the brimming tide
That called thee Mother, thou the fairest bride
That ever wedded ocean, O Montauk.

I dreamed I saw thee sitting wealth-enshrined,
Thy bosom gemmed with amber, pearl, and jade,
And all the world with tribute laden laid
Their gifts about thy feet; I saw thee twined
And netted to the commonweal of man
With webs of steel, with pinioned wings to span
The rushing hours; all thy heart did plan
Envisioned and accomplished, O Montauk.

I dreamed that thou wert throned among the gods
On high Olympus; bearded Neptune knelt
And Ceres smiled, while Vulcan's tightened belt
About thy waist was drawn; the scepteral rods
Of commerce, agriculture, didst thou hold,
And mankind free, unfettered, thee extolled
As one to whom the ages had enscrolled
With glory, life eternal, O Montauk.

I dreamed I saw thee marching in thy day
Of pride and beauty, and thy templed hills
With palace shrines ensplendored, all fulfilled
Thy visions, magic sunshine, gulls and spray;

And all the earth bowed low where at thy shrine
The tropics pour, the get of frosted rime,
The spoil of field, of waterway, and mine
Between thy fingers filtered, O Montauk.

I dreamed I saw thee walking in the dawn
Where golden hands the curtains rolled away,
And lo, the baby fingers of the day
Spread smeary tints of crimson, jade, and tawn
Across thy cheek and lips and in thy hair,
With wings of seagulls flashing in the air;
And oh, that I might linger, linger where
Thy visions were accomplished, O Montauk.

TIDES OF ARSH'MOMOQUE

Oh, know ye the way of the clam-flats, the tides of Arsh'momoque
By north-quartered winds driven, bare to the feet that would wander
With basket and shoveling hoe, rubber-booted and oil-skinned?
The brooding sky hovering gray, and the threat of the snow-storm
In heavy-eyed sullenness waiting the word of releasement?

And know ye the bar where the salt-rotted ice fragments cover
The worm-eaten holes in the sand, and the paper-shelled quahaug
Emotionless waiting, his breath-sucking chimney betraying?
The fright, the surprise, and the reaching neck's hasty withdrawal?
The fountaining gasp as the blade of the hoe undermines him?

And saw ye the gulls, that with hungry eyes famishing gathered
By scores 'round the basket, made bold by the pangs of their craving?
Their wing-feathers trailed, and the tracks of their feet in the snowdrift?
The frozen, barred road of the sea, and the blanketed woodland?
The emptiness stalking the beach, and the bay, and the meadows?

And saw ye the red eyes that pleaded in piteous longing?
The stretching of necks, and the cry as of babe that is orphaned
And hungering nuzzles the breast that is suckless forever?
The struggle? the screaming? the fight o'er the clam ye discarded?
The thrashing of wings, and the gulping that looted your basket?

And felt ye the width of the daylight diminished, aborted?
The brooding night patiently waiting, her hand on the curtain?
The stillness? the vastness? the loneliness aching and crying?
The silence that hung with the beating of awesomeness 'round ye?
The skeleton wood walling in, and the desolate cedars?

Oh, know ye the way of the lowering tide of Arsh'momoque?
The gathering twilight in sleep-lidded slowness descending?
The holes in the sand 'neath the salt-rotted ice and the seaweed?
The lonely, the famishing cry of the feathering gray ones?
The night closing down; and the tracks of their feet in the snowdrift?

ARSH-MINNAUTAUK

Arsh-Minnautauk,
I would linger
By thy white and beaten beaches,
By the waters of thine inlets
I would bide;
I would bathe my soul enchanted
Where thy frowning forefoot reaches
Like a sentried lion crouching
On the tide.

Arsh-Minnautauk,
I would linger
By thy tortured dunes forever,
By thy rolling pearling billows
I would dwell;
In the glory of the sunrise
O'er thy moors of purpled heather,
And the chiming of a mystic
Channel bell.

Arsh-Minnautauk,
I would linger
Where thy hills in magic madness
Fling enraptured royal ensemble
To the sea;
With the graying gull forever
In the sunshine of thy gladness,
Arsh-Minnautauk, I would linger
Here with thee.

THE ROAD

I WANT to take my collar off
An' chuck my tie away,
An' never shave nor comb my hair
Till I get old an' gray,
I ain't a-goin' to work no more,
Just laze, an' loaf, an' bum,
An' I should worry, I should fret
That paydays never come.

I'm go'n' to crank the Lizzie up
An' drift along the road,
With no loud-speakin' 'tachments
An' no back-seat-drivin' load,
But only me, just me alone,
An' not a soul beside,
With all the world a'callin' me
To ride, an' ride, an' ride.

I'm go'n' to open up my trap,
Sing all the tunes I know,
The gospel hymns an' old school songs,
An' stuff of long ago,
Till every tripper that I pass
Along the pike will swear:
"The gink that drives that Ford sedan
Must be a nut for fair."

I want to find a wooded spot
The golden road beside,
Where in a tiny, laughin' brook
The fairy shadows hide,
An' when the night comes tumblin' down,
With stars that wheel an' scream,
Upon the seat of my old car
I'll curl an' peaceful dream.

In rags, an' dirt, an' happiness
The highways' lord am I,
My Kingdom is the Open Road,
My borderland the sky;
No boss, no job, no happy home,
Oh, who so gay an' free,
With all the world stretched out in front
A-callin', callin' me.

PECONIC RIVER

River of the Blessed Isle,
Jewelled glory burning,
Peering through the morning mist,
Pearl to crimson turning;
Royal the pine-boughed diadem
Crests thy hills and hollows
Like a host that plumed and lanced
Trumpets calling follows;
Tidelet of the Sunrise Trail,
All aglow, aquiver,
Singing in the golden dawn,
Blue Peconic River.

Flash of silver, scarlet finned,
Leaping, swirling, gleaming,
Where the fleecy, shadowed cloud
In thy flood lies dreaming;
Waves that whisper as they flow,
Swallows circle o'er thee,
While the hills that saw thy birth
Bow their heads before thee;
Little ripples murmuring:
"Ye who know her give her
Tender thoughts and memories,
Blue Peconic River."

When the length'ning shades of night
  Dusk thy pines and willows,
Dark the shadows of the hills
  March across thy billows;

Comes the dew-drenched evening star
  In thy breast to nestle,
And the moon across thy wave
  Throws a silver trestle;
Baby wavelets, go to sleep,
  Tiny ripples shiver
To the night-wind's lullaby,
  Blue Peconic River.

DRIFTIN' IN

(To the Old Women of Amagansett)

Out across the storm-tossed billow,
Not a light, not a sail,
Driftin', driftin' comes the seaweed,
Storm-wrack of the passin' gale,
An' the night is closin' down,
An' the tide is comin' in.

Oh, my eyes are red with weepin',
Oh, my eyes are blind with weepin',
Oh, my eyes are dead with watchin',
An' my empty bosom's achin',
Not a light upon the billow,
Not a sail upon the billow,
Oh, my heart, my heart is breakin',
An' the tide, an' the tide,
An' the tide is comin' in.

What is that upon the billow?
What, oh, what is that a-floatin'?
God have mercy, tell me, tell me
What the murd'rin' rollers hide.
No. 'Tis only driftin' seaweed,
Gray an' dirty driftin' seaweed,
Torn an' ragged driftin' seaweed
On the tide, on the tide,
On the tide a-driftin' in.

Out across the storm-tossed billow,
Not a light, not a sail,
Driftin', driftin' comes the seaweed,
Storm-wrack of the passin' gale,
An' the night is closin' down,
An' the tide is comin' in.

THE SCOOT

RIDIN' down from Manorville
Every day I see
Where a dame with shinin' hair
Smiles an' waves to me,
Little dame with laughin' eyes,
Dressed in faded blue,
Standin' in the pasture
As the Scoot drifts through.

Robin in the cherry tree,
Rabbit in the brush,
Misty shadows on the hills,
Meadow lark an' thrush;
Scent of cedar, scent of pine,
Birch an' laurel, too,
An' a girl a-wavin'
As the Scoot drifts through.

Chink-a-chink of cattle bell,
Sun a-ridin' high,
Scabby frogs along the ditch
Stare us passin' by,
Reelin' off the happy miles,
Miles too short an' few,
With a girl a-wavin'
As the Scoot drifts through.

There's a girl in Manorville,
Little dame I know,
Standin' by the pasture fence
Where the willows grow,
Hair like flashin' flames of gold,
Eyes of fairy blue,
Smilin' an' a-wavin'
As the Scoot drifts through.

MY LUCIA'S PARASOL

Southampton's sands are cold and wet
And dreary rolls the sea
When I go wand'ring where no tent
Of rainbow waits for me,
When I go seeking by the tide
The green and crimson ball—
The yellow-flowered bubble
Of my Lucia's parasol.

But oh, Southampton's sands are gold
And blue the summer skies,
The gulls are silver wings of love,
The waves are lullabys,
When I come swift and eager
Where the madcap breakers fall
Before the lazy shadow
Of my Lucia's parasol.

I would that I were shafted sun
Or purling waves at play
To kiss the honey from her lips
And drench her feet in spray,
I would that I were but a breath
Of ocean breeze to crawl
Beneath the fringing edges
Of my Lucia's parasol.

Southampton's beach is Paradise
And Eden by the Sea,
The world a-singing golden joy,
And all belongs to me
When I across the whisp'ring sands
Fast heed a laughing call
To dream beneath the shadows
Of my Lucia's parasol.

ORIENT

So long ago, so long ago, beside my Mother's knee
At eventide I'd sit and list the tales she told to me,
The wond'rous tales of other days, the days when she was young,
When elms lined the Bowery and alianthus hung
Their lacy fronds of greenery across the garden wall,
When crinoline and bombazine, a tiny parasol,
Was still considered quite the thing, and love's eternal vow
Was plighted in the meadow that is towered Harlem now;
And oftentimes she'd tell me of the happy days she spent
The summer she was sweet sixteen in lazy Orient.

As one that senses music that no other ear can hear,
As one that sees the chariot of angels drawing near,
As one who walks on Jordan's banks and visions Paradise,
So smiled the memories of youth within her dreaming eyes;
And sitting in her rocker 'neath the lamp-light's gentle glow
She lived again that summer of the days of long ago.
Perhaps, perhaps some God so just and merciful had thrown
Across the path of poverty that marked her for its own
A fleeting shaft, a riven cloud, an hour's sunshine sent—
I thank Thee, oh Creator, for the sands of Orient.

Oh, Night, when I am wearied and my weeping soul would flee
The Now and This to sit again beside my Mother's knee,
To take the little eastbound train, the fringe-topped carryall,
And in the honeyed twilight down the golden highway crawl,
To fill a homely rocker on the old Inn's spacious porch
And watch the schooner's riding-lights, the June-bug's streaking torch,
To hear the happy laughter of the lovers on the sands
And smile in comprehension of a moon that understands,
To breathe the names of tiny flames, the beacon lights that stalk,
The flashing of Plum Island and the glimmer of Montauk.

Oh, wash the dust of bitter trails, in foam and moonlit spray
Upon the sea's eternal board, oh, wash my cares away,
Oh, cleanse my sad unhappy heart of more than fleshly pain
And draw me to my Mother's knee, a little child again.
Oh, drag me from the drifting years to where the lamp-light gleamed
On mellowed, treasured memories of things my Mother dreamed;
Oh, let me walk a little child, beside her, hand in hand,
Among the honeysuckles and the sun-drenched singing sand,
Along the lazy road that cries of peace and heart's content
And whispers magic beauty to the waves of Orient.

RONKONKOMA

I BRING ye tides where tideless waters roll;
I bring ye wells of sweetness
That your thirst
Eternal shall be quenched; I bring ye hills
That singing weave their fronded forest feet
Among the grassing edges of my flood;
The lamp of love, the drowsy swollen moon,
I cuddle to my breast;
I swing and rock
The fretting hesitating little stars
That whimper in my cradle:
Hush-a-bye,
Be still, and sleep, my babies,
Or perchance
The wicked sun will carry you away
And eat you up for breakfast.
I give gold
In brimming handsful where the crimson cloud
Of morning comes to wash his misty face
And wipe the teary dewdrops from his eye
And fain would spend the day

Inverted in the mirror that is me.
To ye I sing
The echo of a thousand magic songs
Of mystery and legend
Scented faint
With ancient things forgotten,
And I dream
With ye the dreams that cry within your soul.

WITHDRAWN